

July 2004

Contact

Hand Me the Hymnal

A look at the place of the
hymnal in public worship.

The Community Newspaper

An overlooked tool to advertise
the local church.

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

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Keith Burden

The Note

Revival services were scheduled

to conclude Sunday morning, but extraordinary results prompted the church to continue the meeting a few more days. I was the youth and music minister. My responsibilities included leading congregational singing and directing the sanctuary choir.

Half an hour before the evening service, I sat in my office (a corner of the High School Sunday School classroom) reviewing the order of service and hymns I had selected. My concentration was momentarily broken as a teen from the youth group entered the room and took a seat in front of my desk.

Caught Off Guard

I gave him a courteous nod and quickly refocused my attention on the matters at hand. As I jotted down some last-minute instructions for the organist and pianist, a piece of folded paper plopped awkwardly onto the desktop. I glanced up only to see the top of the young man's head—he leaned forward in the chair with his elbows on his knees and his head buried in his hands.

Somewhat perplexed, I slowly unfolded the paper and read the handwritten note: *I think I've been called to serve the Lord*. As I pondered the meaning of this unexpected message, my heart began to race with excitement. In an attempt to disguise my enthusiasm, I took a deep breath and calmly asked, "Is the Lord calling you to preach?"

Moment of Truth

At first he seemed reluctant to speak as he struggled with his emotions. Finally, through his tears, he asked, "How can I be sure?" I shared my personal experience and pointed to several factors that convinced me of my calling. A look of relief

swept over his countenance as he expressed his willingness to follow the Lord's leading.

At the conclusion of the evening service, the young man went forward and acknowledged God's call on his life. Since then I've had the privilege of seeing others surrender to the ministry. It is without question one of the most rewarding experiences a preacher can know.

An Amazing Journey

In time that young preacher boy attended a Free Will Baptist college, married his high school sweetheart and eventually graduated from seminary. Today he pastors one of our leading, growing churches with a gifted staff and a multi-dimensional ministry. By his own admission, his spiritual journey and professional development have been nothing short of amazing.

As I look over my shoulder and review the last 29 years of our relationship, I am reminded of some thought-provoking truths. For instance, *don't discount the power of your influence*.

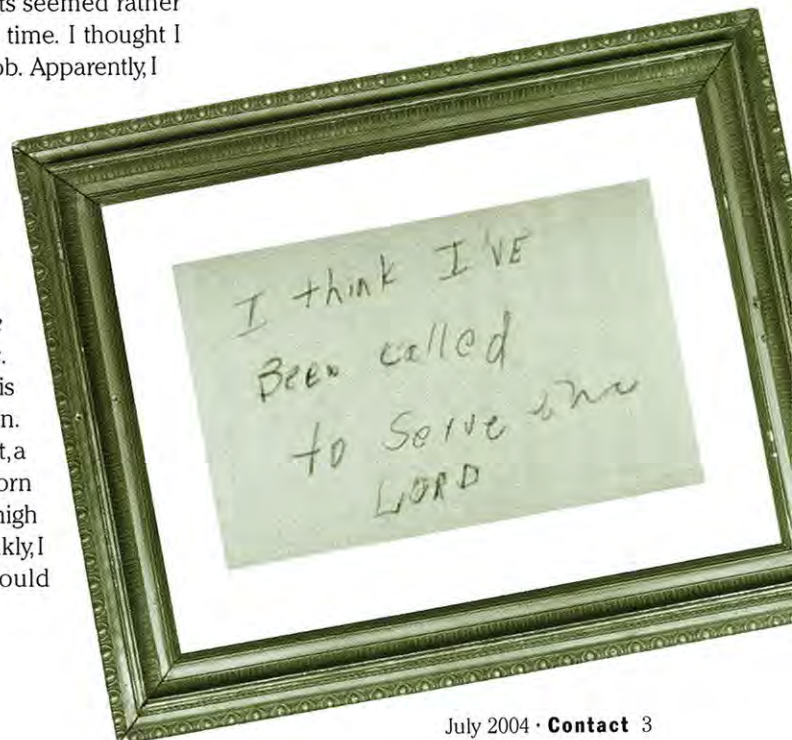
Things like attending ballgames, youth rallies and teen retreats seemed rather inconsequential at the time. I thought I was simply doing my job. Apparently, I was having a greater impact than I realized. What makes this even more incredible is the fact that I was his youth pastor for only two years.

Never underestimate the potential in others. Early on I recognized this was a special young man. He was a bright student, a gifted athlete and a born leader. Naturally I had high hopes for him, but frankly, I never imagined he would

one day speak at a national convention, teach at an institute in Russia or be vice-chairman of the Foreign Missions Board. You never know how God may use someone.

Perhaps most important, *give God the credit for what gets accomplished*. Lest anyone think I'm claiming responsibility for this young man's call to the ministry or success—think again! God deserves all the glory and praise for that. He could have used anyone to achieve His purposes. I'm just grateful He allowed me to play a minor role in the process.

I had the privilege of preaching in that pastor's church a few months ago. Before I spoke, I presented him with that 29-year-old original handwritten note... matted and framed. You should have seen the expression on Pastor Randy Wilson's face when I handed him the note that began his long journey to Bethany FWB Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. This time he was the one caught off guard. It was a *noteworthy* moment neither of us will ever forget. ■



A closer look at the value of hymn books in public worship.

Hand Me the Hymnal

By Melvin Worthington

Retirement took me back to my roots as well as reality where I discovered that not every church uses advanced technology. How does one worship without a high-tech sound system or screen? Can we worship and praise God without a high-tech environment?

Every church attendee needs to be acquainted with at least two books—the *Holy Bible* and the *hymn book*.

Consider the danger. In changing times there is always the danger of conforming to change whether it is right or wrong. Change in programs and practices must be measured by unchanging theological concepts. The messages, methods and materials used in the church must be consistent with theological concepts set forth in the scriptures.

Consider the distortion. Some Christians are under the impression that Christ can be shaped into any personality or life style which suits their preference.

Makujina states, "And why not? Industrialized western society offers its consumers choice if nothing else. Our supermarkets, car dealerships and screen savers are bright beacons to the fact that we are a people of choice and

variety. As we customize our cars, suits and houses, so we have customized Christ. . . . Whatever currently happens to be popular is carelessly laminated on to Christ, no matter how irreverent or vulgar."

Consider our duty. All technology need not be discredited, detested or discarded. While there are occasions for putting hymns, psalms and spiritual songs on a screen, this practice must not be a substitute for the hymn book. The hymn book, like the Bible, has served the church for generations. Recent data suggests that 88% of Protestant churches still use hymnals.

Sitting in church over a year ago, I said to my wife, "Honey, hand me the hymn book." I began thumbing through its pages and it rekindled my passion for the hymns of the faith.



The hymn book, like the Holy Bible, makes a profound impression on those who peruse it.

Value of the Hymn Book

The *nature* of our hymnal contributes to its value. *Rejoice, The Free Will Baptist Hymn Book* contains hundreds of songs sung by Christians around the world and songs which promote Free Will Baptist doctrine. *Rejoice* contains songs which express our commitment to missions, evangelism, the gospel ordinances, the fundamentals of Christian living and biblical stewardship.

Rejoice is designed to help unify our broad and diverse fellowship of believers who bear the Free Will Baptist name. Martin Luther gave the people the Bible and the hymnal in their own language.

The *notes* in our hymnal contribute to its value. Although many people cannot read music, they can see when the notes go up and down. It is difficult to sing when all we see are words without notes. Over a period of time, this practice may well diminish the desire and ability of congregations to enjoy singing. This will become a source of embarrassment and a serious problem for succeeding generations.

I have observed that many in the congregation do not sing unless they have a hymnal. Without the music (notes) they hesitate to try to sing. Perhaps it would be wise when hymns are projected on the screen to include both the words and music (notes).

The *need* for the hymnal contributes to its value. When we take a class in school, we need a textbook. A book encour-

ages exploring. You might discover words and truths just right for your life on the wrong page of the hymnal, in an unsung stanza or spot a new favorite as you browse the pages.

The hymnal helps shape the concept of Christian living as it expresses the teachings of scripture in ways that are memorable and handed down for centuries. It introduces the congregation to ideas they may not have otherwise encountered. Images and phrases are painted that help us understand God and the church.

Our Free Will Baptist hymn book, *Rejoice*, emphasizes Free Will Baptist distinctives, including our doctrine and practice. Neglect of the hymn book can cause us to disconnect from and disregard the past.

Virtue of the Hymn Book

One virtue of the hymnal is its breadth. Most hymn books contain a large variety of songs. *Rejoice*, for example, has songs from the Western European, American-Folk, singing convention, scripture-song, youth chorus and gospel hymn categories. Included with each hymn is a scripture verse relating to the hymn.

Unique to *Rejoice* is an index of scripture allusions. This practical tool for pastors is a concordance-like list of scripture references implied and quoted in the songs. *Rejoice* also includes 100 readings, including responsive readings of scripture, calls to worship, benedictions and the Free Will Baptist Covenant.

Another virtue of the hymnal is its *balance*. *Rejoice* contains songs related to worship and praise, the gospel, the

church, the gospel ordinances, the Christian life, our eternal hope and special occasions. Songs for almost every occasion are found in *Rejoice*, our denominational hymn book.

The hymnal contains songs from the past and the present. Balance means we do not limit all our singing to serious, ponderous hymns. We must keep in mind that our culture has so bombarded us with trivial material that we often lose a sense of proportion when it comes to reading material.

Still another virtue of the hymnal is its *beauty*. Stately hymns provide a vivid concept of God's majesty and magnificence. Hymns such as *A Mighty Fortress*, *How Great Thou Art* and *Amazing Grace* reflect the beauty of the *Rejoice Hymn Book*.

Mungons quotes Best who reminds us, "...Christianity is not just contemporary language; it is classic language, time-honored and time-polished expression. Christianity is not just quick news, it is hard news, it is historically validated news, and it is long-term news."

A final virtue of the hymnal is its *blessings*. I acknowledge that the early church had neither hymns nor video projectors. Nonetheless, I believe the hymn book has a place in personal and corporate worship. Reading the words of hymns in the hymnal during private personal devotions is a source of information, instruction and inspiration.

View of the Hymn Book

How we view the hymn book determines to a great extent how we value it. One may view the hymnal as a *tool chest*. Contained within the pages of a hymn book are patterns,

precepts and practices which will enrich our lives. The hymn book is a remarkable tool for personal devotions. The songs are an entire library of personal faith—the experiences of Christians in the past and in the present.

The words in the hymns provide a vocabulary for us to use in our worship and praise, our surrender to God, our service for God and our living for God. The hymn book is a tool chest with the right tools to help Christians live a victorious Christian life.

One may view the hymnal as a *theological composition*. The hymn book sets forth theological concepts. Some people may never read theological works that explain scripture, but they can read from the hymnal every week. The hymnal is a ready means of presenting and teaching Christian doctrine even though it is often overlooked as an instructional tool.

Martin Luther, more than anyone else, returned singing to the congregation. His critics declared, "He has done more damage with his songs than all his preaching."

How sad when we squander this teaching opportunity by singing songs, new and old alike, that teach wrong theology or no theology at all. We will not agree with every song in the hymnal from a doctrinal standpoint, but we should commit ourselves to analyzing our hymnals and other worship material so that we can teach good theology through our hymns and hymnals.

One may view the hymnal as a *treasure collection*. The hymn book illustrates the understanding of others regarding the Word of God. It provides a unique source for teaching children in family devotions.

I prefer to use the hymn book in church. Others may prefer high-tech video with wide screens. Perhaps the best thing is to blend the hymn book and the video screen in services where possible. Contrary to what some may say, technology is here to stay and so is the hymn book. When I attend church I like to hear, "Take the hymn book and turn to page..." It is music to my ears. I respond by saying to my wife, sitting beside me, "Honey, hand me the hymnal."



About the Writer: Dr. Melvin Worthington served 23 years as executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. When he retired in 2002, he was named executive secretary emeritus. He now co-pastors (with his twin brother, Milton) Liberty Free Will Baptist Church in Ayden, North Carolina.

BEYOND BELIEF





The local newspaper may be the best way to advertise your church.

An Old Reliable

By Nelson Henderson

They come in the mail almost daily. Stuffed envelopes full of slick printed material on ways you can promote your church. Promising success and money-back guarantees, these marketing tools even have sentence

testimonials from pastors beside their smiling faces. If only growing a church was that easy.

I would be less than honest if I told you that I never fell for one of those promotions. But after 20-plus years in the min-

istry, I have learned one valuable lesson. There is no one promotional tool which works in all geographical areas, nor is there a one-size-fits-all plan for making every church visible in its community.

One time-tested and tried, though often

overlooked, promotional opportunity is the newspaper. All larger cities and many smaller communities have their daily or sometimes weekly editions. Though this may not be your favorite means of promotion, nor may it yield the most results, don't

miss the wide range of benefits from using the newspaper.

Cost-Friendly

The slick promotions are eye-catching and often cost-prohibitive. Very few churches have unlimited advertising budgets, but free advertising from the local newspaper is available to every church. Other than paid advertisements purchased by churches, the religion section of the newspaper is almost always free. Now that is cost-friendly!

Available to every church is access to every person who reads that section of the

Our local newspaper has written different articles concerning special services, projects and ministries for our youth and church groups. After returning from a mission trip to Panama, I was contacted for an interview by a local reporter. The article was given an entire page of coverage. From this article a local service organization invited me to share about my trip. It was a ministry opportunity open to me at no cost.

The local paper has covered veterans' services, pastor appreciation services, youth ministries such as our Foreign Missions TEAM participants and National CTS winners,

es, meeting dates and times or contact numbers. This assumes that everyone knows where the church is located just by seeing the name.

After pastoring in a small town where the church is located on one of the two main highways within the city limits, I am constantly amazed how many people pass the church daily but could not tell you the name. Don't forget the details.

Rushing to meet a deadline can cause one to miss important details. Although most papers have reasonable deadlines, it is always good to prepare ahead. Knowing that our local newspaper is flexible with

Though the local newspaper may not be your favorite means of promotion, nor may it yield the most results, don't miss the wide range of benefits from using the newspaper.

paper. Few advertisement opportunities available to the church have the potential of reaching a more diverse group of people than the newspaper.

Many small-town newspapers are always searching for local news and welcome church news. The editors are usually open and rarely censor what is included. Some newspapers will edit the content, rewriting the information, but often if the article is well written it will be used intact. A few well-written and grammatically-correct articles could gain you quick favor with your local reporter or editor.

Options and Opportunities

Even if you feel your editorial skills are inadequate, there are still ways to get your news printed. Consider giving your local editor a call the next time you have a newsworthy item. They often are willing to send a reporter to compose the article.

and other areas of ministry in which our church has participated.

A Picture Is Worth . . .

What catches your eye first when you scan the newspaper? It's always the pictures. Then one reads the article. Even in a technologically advanced society, the old cliché, "a picture is worth a thousand words" is still true. If people don't have time to read an entire article, they will look at a picture and read the caption. A picture with a short, easy-to-read caption will do more than a well-written, lengthy article which goes unread.

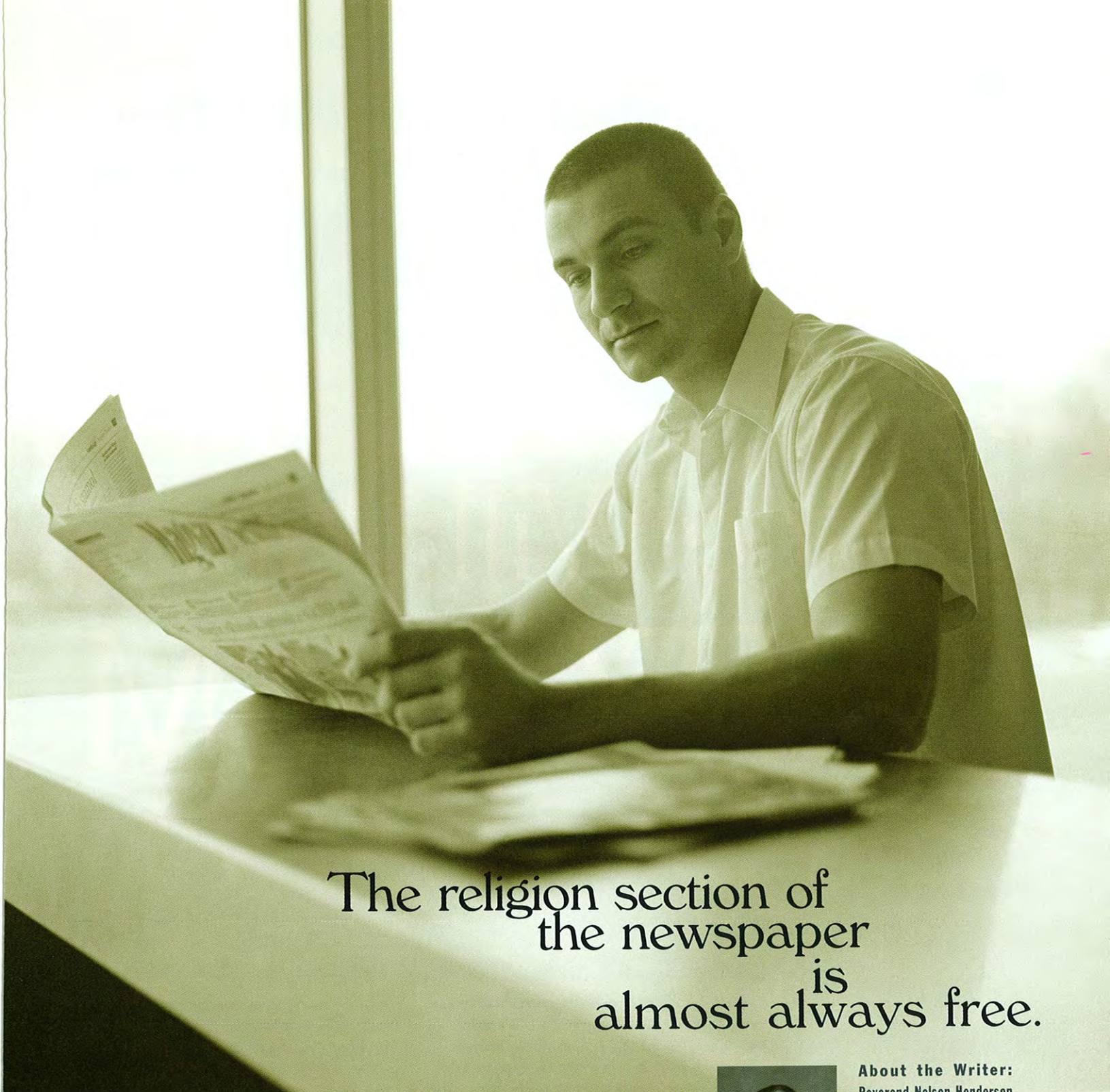
Details and Deadlines

One of my pet peeves is church advertisements which leave out critical information. I have seen paid church advertisements in newspapers which left out their address,

deadlines, I checked with two of the larger newspapers in the state and was quite surprised. Even larger daily newspapers will accept articles as late as the day before they publish their weekly religion page. Where else can you find a way to promote the ministry of your local church which is as flexible as the old reliable newspaper?

Don't Forget to . . .

- 1. Always include the address and directions which can be listed in any church article.**
- 2. Include the name of the pastor. It is valuable public relations to help people make a connection between the church and the pastor.**
- 3. List the names of the people in pictures used in articles.**



The religion section of
the newspaper
is
almost always free.

4. Give service times and church phone number when possible.
5. Use this as a ministry opportunity inside the church. Some of the church youth may be in journalism class in school, and this would be the per-

fect opportunity for involvement. Other adults may be gifted in journalism and would gladly serve in this area.

Yes, the old reliable can still be effective in our generation. ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Nelson Henderson is a graduate of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College and serves on the Board of Trustees. He has pastored churches in Oklahoma and Arkansas. He is in his 14th year as pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church in Pocahontas, Arkansas.



Fifty-seven questions that every Free Will Baptist should be able to answer.

A Free Will Baptist CATECHISM

By Paul V. Harrison

The most common word translated “teach” in the New Testament is the Greek term *didasko*, from which we derive the word

didactic. Another Greek word rendered “teach” is *catecheo*. From this word we get the term catechism and several other related words.

A catechism is a question and answer document used as a tool to teach truths about God and the Bible. It has a long history in the church, and many Christian parents have used catechisms to instruct their children in the teachings of the Lord. Even Free Will Baptist forebears have employed this tool. For example, 17th-century theologian Thomas Grantham wrote one, calling it *St. Paul's Catechism*.

Recognizing the useful potential of such a tool, our church put in place a 57-question cat-

echism. Taking up about five minutes of class time, it is used in Sunday School week by week and taught alongside the regular lesson.

The children are encouraged to memorize each week's question and answer and given an opportunity to recite. Adults, while not expected to learn the catechism, also cover a question each week, helping them both to learn Bible doctrine and to be informed as to what the children are studying.

What follows is the catechism. If you think it might fit into your church's ministry, please feel free to use it.

Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church Catechism

1. *Who is God?*

Answer: God is a spirit (John 4:24) who is the creator of everything (Genesis 1:1). He is perfectly good (Psalm 34:8) and has all power (Isaiah 40:10). God is a personal being with the ability to think, feel, speak and act.

2. *Is there any other God?*

Answer: No. There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), and He exists as a unity of three persons called the Trinity. These three persons are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mark 1:9-11).

3. *When did God begin to exist?*

Answer: God has always existed and had no beginning (Genesis 1:1). He is the only self-existent being.

4. *What is the relationship among the three persons of the Trinity?*

Answer: They love one another (John 14:31; 17:26; Galatians 5:22). They are equal, though they have different roles (Matthew 28:18-20).

5. *What is the role of the Father?*

Answer: The Father loves the Son (John 3:35). He providentially cares for the world and all who are in it (Matthew 6:26). He reveals Jesus to people (Matthew 16:17) and draws them to Him (John 6:44). He forgives sins (Matthew 6:14). He listens to and answers prayers (Matthew 6:9-13). He sends the Holy Spirit to mankind (John 14:26). He keeps believers from the Devil (John 10:29), and He sends them out in His service (John 20:21).

6. *What is the role of the Son?*

Answer: The Son offers forgiveness and saves people from their sins (Matthew 9:6; 18:11). He serves as judge over mankind (John 5:22).

7. *What is the role of the Holy Spirit?*

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and convinces them of the truth of Jesus (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit regenerates those who trust Christ (John 3:5-6). When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit begins to live in that person and to help him become holy (Romans 8:9). He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26).

8. *How do we know about God?*

Answer: We know God through the wonders of creation (Psalm 19:1-4), through His image in which we are made

(Genesis 1:27), and especially through His Son Jesus (John 1:18). We know about God from the scriptures, the Bible.

9. *What are the scriptures?*

Answer: The scriptures are God's inspired and inerrant message to mankind (II Timothy 3:16). Whatever the Bible says is true is true. Whatever it says is false is false (John 17:17). There are 66 different books of scripture, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

10. *What are the books of the Old Testament?*

Answer: The books of the Old Testament are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

11. *What are the books of the New Testament?*

Answer: The books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation.

12. *Who wrote the Bible?*

Answer: Holy men of God wrote the Bible, being guided in their writing by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21).

13. *What is the incarnation?*

Answer: The incarnation is the act by which the Son of God became a human being named Jesus, being born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23).

14. *Was Jesus part man and part God?*

Answer: No. Jesus was fully man (I Timothy 2:5) and fully God at the same time (John 1:1), having both a human and a divine nature.

15. *What is mankind's relationship with God?*

Answer: All human beings are made in the image of God. However, because of Adam's fall into sin, all are born with a sinful nature, are guilty before God and are spiritually separated from Him (Ephesians 2:1-3).



16. What is sin?

Answer: Sin is a violation of the law of God (I John 3:4).

17. What does the Bible teach was the reason Jesus died on the cross?

Answer: Jesus suffered and died on the cross that mankind may have their sins forgiven and be cleansed (I Peter 1:18–19). In His death Jesus took our place under the wrath of God. He was punished for our sins in our place (Isaiah 53:5–6).

18. What happened after Jesus died and was buried?

Answer: On the third day Jesus rose from the grave, never to die again (Luke 24:1–8). This rising is called the resurrection.

19. Where is Jesus now?

Answer: Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:1–3) where He now lives, seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1).

20. How can a person experience forgiveness of sins?

Answer: A person's sins are forgiven and he is saved when through faith he commits his life in obedience to Jesus (Ephesians 1:7) and repents of his sin (Luke 13:3).

21. What does it mean to repent?

Answer: To repent of sin is to turn away from it (Ezekiel 18:30).

22. What is justification?

Answer: Justification is the act whereby God declares the sinner forgiven of his sins and in right standing with Him (Romans 5:1). When we place our faith in Christ, His righteous life and His death become ours. He paid to God what we owed and could not pay (Romans 3:21–25; II Corinthians 5:21).

23. What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the process a Christian enters at conversion in which he becomes more and more holy throughout his life (I Thessalonians 5:23).

24. Can a saved person ever return to a state of not being a Christian?

Answer: Yes. Though a believer enjoys the keeping power of God (John 10:28), he can stray into sin and harden his heart against God's convicting power to the point that he could abandon his faith in Jesus. Such a person is lost forever and without hope (Hebrews 6:4–6).

25. What is baptism?

Answer: Baptism is the act of immersing a Christian in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in obedience to the command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19).

26. Why is a person baptized?

Answer: A believer is baptized to obey the command of Jesus and to show others his decision to follow God.

27. What does baptism symbolize?

Answer: Baptism symbolizes the union the believer enjoys in Jesus' death and resurrection (Romans 6:1–4). It also symbolizes having our sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

28. What is the church?

Answer: The church is a local organization of believers, joined together to worship God (Acts 13:2), to teach and learn the scriptures (Romans 16:25), to hold one another accountable (Matthew 18:15–17) and to serve as a witness to unbelievers (I Thessalonians 1:8).

29. What are the basic officers of the church?

Answer: The pastor is the main preacher and teacher of the church, who exercises oversight over the group (I Timothy 3:1–7). Deacons are godly men who assist the pastor and congregation in carrying out the mission of the church (I Timothy 3:8–10).

30. What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a memorial celebration of Jesus' death for sinners in which believers eat bread and drink juice that represent Jesus' body and blood given for us on the cross (I Corinthians 11:29–30).

31. Who should participate in the Lord's Supper?

Answer: Only those who have been saved should participate in the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:29–30).

32. What is the Washing of the Saints' Feet?

Answer: It is a commemoration of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet which teaches humility and reminds the believer of the necessity of a daily cleansing from sin (John 13:2–17).

33. What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is speaking to God.

34. What happens to a person when he dies?

Answer: When a person dies, his spirit goes either to Heaven (Philippians 1:23) or to Hell (Luke 16:22–23).

35. What happens to a person's body when he dies?

Answer: At death the body is left on earth. When Jesus returns, the bodies of the dead will be resurrected and reunited with their spirits (John 5:28–29).

36. *Will Jesus come to earth again?*

Answer: Yes. At a time that God the Father has planned, Jesus will gloriously return to earth (Hebrews 9:28). He will then take all believers to Heaven and condemn all unbelievers to Hell (Matthew 25:31–46).

37. *Where can the Ten Commandments be found in the Bible?*

Answer: The Ten Commandments can be found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

38. *What is the First Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

39. *What does the First Commandment mean?*

Answer: The First Commandment directs us to worship God only and to glorify Him as God.

40. *What is the Second Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."

41. *What does the Second Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Second Commandment means that in the worship of God we must not use any images.

42. *What is the Third Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

43. *What does the Third Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Third Commandment means that God's name must always be used with respect and reverence.

44. *What is the Fourth Commandment?*

Answer: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

45. *What does the Fourth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Fourth Commandment instructs us to keep one day in seven as a special day of worship, set apart from the other six days. In the Christian era this day is Sunday in celebration of Jesus' resurrection on that day.

46. *What is the Fifth Commandment?*

Answer: "Honour thy father and thy mother."

47. *What does the Fifth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Fifth Commandment directs us to show proper respect and obedience to our parents. By extension the commandment also commands us to show proper respect to all those with legitimate authority over us.

48. *What is the Sixth Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not kill."

49. *What does the Sixth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Sixth Commandment teaches us that human life is sacred. We should use all lawful means of preserving human life, both ours and others. It is wrong to commit murder.

50. *What is the Seventh Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

51. *What does the Seventh Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Seventh Commandment means that the marriage covenant is to be guarded from any sexual impurities. Husbands and wives are to be faithful to one another.

52. *What is the Eighth Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not steal."

53. *What does the Eighth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Eighth Commandment teaches that private ownership must be respected and not violated in any way.

54. *What is the Ninth Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

55. *What does the Ninth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Ninth Commandment directs us always to tell the truth.

56. *What is the Tenth Commandment?*

Answer: "Thou shalt not covet."

57. *What does the Tenth Commandment mean?*

Answer: The Tenth Commandment instructs us to be content with what things we have and not to be longing for other things. ■



About the Writer: Dr. Paul Harrison pastors Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of the Commission for Theological Integrity.

He went to the pound looking for a story.

a Breed

By Dennis E. Hensley

Once while working as a reporter, I was assigned to do an article on how families could adopt a pet dog from area animal shelters. While visiting with the county dogcatcher, I noticed a man going from cage to cage carefully inspecting each animal.

"Is that a veterinarian who works here at the dog pound?" I asked.

"Who, that guy? Naw, he's no vet," answered the dogcatcher. "He's a breeder and trainer of champion show dogs."

This amazed me. "What's a guy like that doing among these mutts and strays?"

Looking for Thoroughbreds

The dogcatcher winked conspiratorially. "He's looking for a thoroughbred," he whispered. "He checks their height and weight, the shape of their ears, the thickness of their coats, even the condition of their teeth. If he finds a pure bred animal, he buys it from us for 10 bucks, cleans it up, teaches it a trick or two, and then sells it for \$750."

"You're kidding," I said, genuinely astounded. "But why would a pure bred dog wind up here?"

"Oh, lots of reasons," said the dogcatcher. "Sometimes they break their collars with their I.D. tags and run away

while at parks or campgrounds. Sometimes their owners get too old to take care of them, so the owners drive to the center of town and turn them loose. I've heard of couples who move to new apartments where pets aren't allowed, so they just set their dogs free when they move."

I nodded my understanding, then said, "That's really nice that the quality animals get a second chance, but what happens to the ones the trainer doesn't want to buy?"

"Well, unless someone is willing to pay the \$10 to redeem them and then give them a new home, we have to kill them," admitted the dogcatcher.

Looking for Sheep

As I drove back to the newspaper, the parallel was not lost on me between those stray animals and unsaved people who "like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6).

He stumbled onto the greatest story ever told.

Without a Savior to pay the price of redemption (Titus 2:14) and to provide a new home in Heaven, (John 14:2), we, too, would be condemned to an awful death.

But, unlike the uncaring pet owners, God never abandons those who are devoted to Him. The Bible tells us that He "did not abandon" His people during the 40 years of wandering in the desert (Nehemiah 9:19),

and today He, likewise, promises His followers, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

In a dog-eat-dog world, it's nice to know that we are seen as champions by the One who is the ultimate Judge. ■



About the Writer: Dr. Dennis E. Hensley is a professor of English at Taylor University Fort Wayne, where he directs the professional writing major. His books include *How to Stop Living for the Applause* (Servant Publishers) and *The Jesus Effect* (Pacific Press).

part





Mexico Association Meets



David Joslin preaches at Mexico Association.

ALTAMIRA, TAMPS., MEXICO—The Mexico Association (southern) met for its annual session at the Bible Institute campus in Altamira, Tamps., on December 19–21, 2003. Several representatives from the United States including Executive Secretary Keith Burden, Home Missions Director Larry Powell, Missionary Thomas Marberry and former Arkansas executive director David Joslin participated in the activities.

David Joslin was the principal speaker for the meeting; he preached at the three main convention worship services. Ramon Zuniga of Springdale, Arkansas, translated his sermons into Spanish.

Other meetings were held during the three-day conference. The Woman's Auxiliary met, heard reports and planned activities for the future. The young people had a special worship service and business meeting in which they planned their youth activities for the next year. Sunday School classes for the children were held Sunday morning before the closing worship service.

During the business session, delegates heard reports from the Executive Committee and from several mission churches. The association is committed to winning souls and establishing new Free Will Baptist churches in Mexico. Rev. Inocente Pacheco Espinoza serves as association president.

Bill Fulcher, Former Missionary, Dies

MAYSVILLE, NC—Reverend William (Bill) McKinley Fulcher, Jr., former missionary church planter to Uruguay and Panama, died March 23 after a massive heart attack. The 70-year-old minister was pastor of Faith FWB Church in Maysville at the time of his death.

Bill and his wife Glenda served 17 years as Free Will Baptist foreign missionary church planters before returning to the states in 1978. They were commissioned October 5, 1960, and left for language study enroute to Uruguay in 1961. They later served in Panama.

Brother Fulcher, a versatile North Carolina native, was converted at age 12. While stationed in Korea as a radio operator with the U.S. Army (1953–'55), Bill felt the Lord's call to foreign missions. He subsequently enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College and graduated in 1959 with a B.A. degree.

In addition to his 17 years as a foreign missionary, Bill pastored almost 20 years in Illinois, Virginia and North Carolina. He served six years as a home missionary to Spanish-speaking constituents (1981–'87) in Houston, Texas. He was named director of promotional development at Southeastern FWB College in 1988, leaving the position in 1991.

Bill and Glenda met and married while students at FWBBC. They had five children in their 46-year marriage. Funeral services were conducted March 26 at Ruth's Chapel FWB Church in New Bern. Reverends Dennis Wiggs, Guy Owens and James Forlines officiated.

Guy Owens spoke of his 50-year David-Jonathan relationship with Bill Fulcher. Dennis Wiggs said Bill's last sermon was titled "What the Bible Says About Heaven." James Forlines presented a Bible with Fulcher's name inscribed on the cover to his widow, Glenda.

Reverend Fulcher is survived by his wife, Glenda; three sons, Bill Fulcher (Hartford, IL), John Fulcher (Suffolk, VA) and Michael Fulcher (Hookerton, NC); one daughter, Susan Burke (Albany, GA); his mother, Edith Fulcher (Small, NC); two brothers, one sister, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.





Georgia State Spotlights Older Ministers

ALBANY, GA—Six older ministers preached to delegates during the 68th annual Georgia State Association, according to the clerk, Keith Lloyd. No theme was selected for the March 18–20 session which met at First FWB Church in Albany, allowing the ministers to choose their own subjects.

All six of the senior ministers are still pastoring: Arthur Smith (Alabama FWB Church, Blackshear), Herbert Waid (Fellowship FWB Church, Albany), Harris Nix (Stoney Hill FWB Church, Glennville), Gene Ross (Cross Roads FWB Church, Cochran), James Sellers (Bethlehem FWB Church, Berlin) and Russell Horne (Calvary FWB Church, Columbus).

Attendance surged to a high of 423 during the Friday night service. Officials reported that 58 ministers, 15 deacons, 20 lay delegates and 87 visitors registered for the meeting.

Moderator Len Blanchard presided during business sessions. Delegates voted to purchase the building housing the state office for \$60,000 and adopted a Georgia Missions Handbook. A resolution affirming marriage as the union of one man and one woman passed.

In other action, delegates authorized a Social Concerns Committee and approved three constitutional changes. The FWBBC Scholarship Fund was renamed the "Charles Clark Scholarship" in his memory, and a plaque presented to the family.

Geraldine (Mrs. Herbert) Waid was given a plaque from the Christian Education Board citing her work as archivist for the Georgia Historical Society.

Delegates adopted a \$775,000 state budget. Funds will be allocated through the Cooperative Plan (\$270,000), with the balance distributed to ACTS 1:8 outreach and other designated giving.

The Georgia Women Active for Christ met Thursday morning to conduct business and for worship. Clerk Keith Lloyd said a highlight for the state association included Friday evening's second Georgia Praise Gathering.

The 2005 state association will meet March 17–19 at Shallowford FWB Church in Marietta.

Georgia History on Microfilm

MOULTRIE, GA—A 20-year project to collect Georgia Free Will Baptist history and preserve it on microfilm has been completed, thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Geraldine Waid, archivist for the Georgia FWB Historical Society. The years in the collection include 1844–1999, the first two centuries of organized Free Will Baptist work in Georgia.

Mrs. Waid said, "Our roots started in what is now called the Chattahoochee Association which began in Muscogee County in 1836. The clerks in that association were diligent in saving their history."

She continued, "In 1986, Mr. E.A. Welch, who had been a clerk, gave a collection of over 100 years of minutes to the Georgia Historical Society for safe keeping. Other clerks and individuals have been cooperative in the project."

Mrs. Waid said personnel at Mercer University's Jack Tarver Library gave invaluable assistance. Dr. Robert Gardner, senior

researcher in the library's Special Collections Department, and Mrs. Susan Broone, director of the department, merged the library's Free Will Baptist collection with that of the Georgia FWB Historical Society.

A copy of the microfilm was purchased by Mercer University and placed in the Jack Tarver Library. The Georgia FWB Historical Society also has a copy of the microfilm which will be placed in the new state office building.

Geraldine Waid has served as archivist for the Georgia FWB Historical Society since 1985. She has also indexed the state's pastors and churches for easy access.

The state Christian Education Board which sponsors the Historical Society's work presented a plaque and monetary gift to Mrs. Waid at the Georgia State Association in March.



Burden, Evans Speak at Arizona District

PHOENIX, AZ—Free Will Baptist executive secretary Keith Burden and Board of Retirement general director William Evans preached during the 52nd annual session of the Arizona District Association. The March

13 event met at North Valley FWB Church in Phoenix.

Moderator George Harvey, Jr., was selected. Reverend Harvey, pastor of North Valley FWB Church, has led the district eight years.

Twelve ministers (seven from Arizona) were among the 50 people who registered. Delegates voted to contribute 10 percent of income to the Cooperative Plan.

The 2005 session will meet March 12 at First FWB Church in Tucson.



CLAYTON, NC—Veteran Free Will Baptist minister, Rev. Adam Scott, died March 26 at age 86. A staunch supporter of Free Will Baptist Bible College and its Alumni

Reverend Adam Scott, 86, Dies

Association, Scott was honored at the college's annual Bible Conference when he was 80 and one of the conference speakers. Struggling to overcome lingering stroke symptoms, he preached from Philippians 1:21.

Adam Scott was born in Texas County, Missouri, in 1917, son of the late Rev. George W. Scott. He attended Southwest Missouri State Teachers College and taught in rural schools several years.

Rev. Scott answered the call to preach in 1945 at age 28. The possessions of Adam and his wife, Nadyne, were sold at auction, and they moved to Nashville with their five-year-old son to attend Free Will Baptist Bible College. Adam was the first from that area of Missouri to attend FWBBC.

He completed the college's two-year course and (when added) the four-year course to graduate with a bachelor's degree. He was a member of the first graduating class.

While a student at FWBBC, Brother Scott pastored Bethlehem FWB Church in Ashland City. He would continue pastoring for almost 40 years in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. He retired in 1983 but served as interim pastor when requested.

Scott served in various associational roles. He was for many years a member of the Board of Ministerial Standing for the Randall Association in North Carolina.

Funeral services were conducted March 29 at Unity FWB Church in Smithfield. Reverends Fred Scott and Reuben Cason officiated.

Reverend Scott was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years in August 2000. He is survived by a son, Duane; three sisters, Mary Halliburton, Daisy Lindsay, Leah Postlewaite; one brother, Rev. Ben Scott; three grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Thomas, Blankenship Join Southeastern Staff



Pat Thomas



Jonathan Blankenship

WENDELL, NC—Two new staffers joined the Southeastern FWB College team this summer, according to Danny Baer, academic dean. Pat (Mrs. Roy) Thomas and Jonathan Blankenship will be on board in time for the fall semester.

Mrs. Thomas will serve as dean of women and live in campus housing. Reverend Blankenship will wear two hats—director of recruitment and staff evangelist.

Southeastern president Lorenza Stox said, "I am thrilled to have a woman of Pat's distinction here on campus to mentor our young ladies. She will be a great asset to the college."

Pat Thomas served 25 years as publications editor with the Home Missions Department while her husband (the late Roy Thomas) was general director and associate director. For the past 48 years, she has been a pastor's wife, home missionary, wife, mother, grandmother, editor and author.

Jonathan Blankenship worked as a student recruiter at Southeastern while enrolled there. He graduated in May and will begin full-time traveling for the school in July. In addition to his student recruitment duties, Jonathan will conduct revivals, speak at camps, address Christian school chapels and preach conferences.

Publications Committee Report

The Publications Committee completed a three-year feasibility study of combining the departmental magazines/newsletters into a single publication. The committee is indebted to the departmental directors and editors who gave a great deal of time and labor working out the logistics of producing a single publication. They are to be commended for their labors.

The resolution adopted in 2001 suggested the following reasons for changing to a single publication:

1. *Avoid needless duplication of the mailing lists.*

When the mailing lists of the departments were combined and the duplicates removed, the combined mailing lists were decreased by over 20,000 names.

2. *Demonstrate good denominational stewardship.*

While a single publication will be more cost effective, it will not result in a dollar savings. For example, at present the Home Missions Department has the largest mailing list of over 34,000 and the Master's Men the smallest with over 2,000. By combining the departmental mailing lists, each department will be reaching over 60,000 households. With what the

departments currently spend and with Randall House, the Foundation and the Board of Retirement volunteering to participate, the magazine can be published.

3. *Promote cooperation and unity among the departments.*

The committee believes this to be true. A consultant from Publishing Support met with the directors and editors and stated the following in his report:

"First, as I stated, I believe your overall concept is a positive step for your denomination. It conveys a new day of working together. . . . It also will reflect a much stronger publication for your denomination than each of the individual publications are on their own."

4. *Provide a complimentary monthly magazine.*

Because of the cost of printing and mailing a complimentary magazine of approximately 48 pages, the magazine would have to be a bi-monthly (6 times a year) publication.

While there will be challenges to overcome, based on the findings of our study, we offer the following recommendation:

We recommend that the magazines/newsletters of the following departments

of the National Association of Free Will Baptists be combined into a single publication to begin in 2005: Executive Office, Board of Retirement, Foreign Missions, Free Will Baptist Bible College, Free Will Baptist Foundation, Home Missions, Master's Men, Randall House.

We further recommend that the directors of the various departments act as an oversight committee with the Executive Secretary serving as chairman of the committee and editor-in-chief of the magazine. The oversight committee shall have the authority to determine the start-up date in 2005, budgets, publication name, advertising and managing editor of the publication. On the start-up date, all regular publications of the departments (*Aim*, *Heartbeat*, *Master's Men Newsletter*, *Bible College Bulletin*, *OutReach*, *Contact*) will cease and be combined into a single publication.

Changing to a single publication will be a dramatic change for our denomination. However, it offers us a great opportunity to present a united front and a united effort for the cause of world evangelism.

The Publications Committee

Nathan Ruble, Chairman
William Smith, Secretary
Edwin Hayes
Jim Marcum
David Williford



(L) Thomas Cook, Brandon Roysden, Bethany Parks, Brandon Stutts, Corey Hawkins.

Bible College Students Elect 2004–2005 Officers

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College students elected officers to lead them during the 2004–05 school year. Thomas Cook, a history major from Cookeville, Tennessee, was elected president.

Other officers are:

- **Brandon Roysden, vice president**—English major from Anderson, Tennessee.
- **Bethany Parks, secretary-treasurer**—

education major from Pleasant View, Tennessee.

- **Brandon Stutts, chaplain**—pastoral training major from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee.

- **Corey Hawkins, worship leader**—music performance major from Greenville, North Carolina.

Please pray for these new student leaders at FWBCC. ■

Alabama: Members of **Oak Grove FWB Church** in **Sylacauga** tripled their ACTS 1:8 giving commitments for 2004. Pastor **Wayne McDaniel** baptized six converts and welcomed 10 new members.

Kansas: Sixty-five men and teen boys gathered at **Prairie View Christian Camp** for the spring state men's retreat, according to **James O. Brewer**, chairman of the Christian Education Board. **David Crowe**, director of church growth and evangelism with the Home Missions Department, preached during the retreat. The men observed the Lord's Supper and the Washing of the Saints' Feet after the Friday evening service.

Michigan: During youth day activities at **Faith FWB Church** in **Ray**, one of the church teens preached the message. **Brad Johnson's** message followed special music and a skit by other youth. Pastor **Rex Evans** said the church purchased a 15-passenger van to transport people to services. The van's first day of operation was youth day, and it was filled to capacity.

Missouri: **Inocente Pacheco**, president of the **Mexico Association**, preached at the **Hispanic FWB Church**, in **Monett** on March 21. Pastor **Bud Bivens** said seven first-time visitors were among the attendees that day; six people were saved. The church gave a Nissan pick-up truck to Brother Pacheco to drive back to Mexico and use in his video ministry.

North Carolina: A two-day, regional Master's Men rally met March 26-27 at **Unity FWB Church** in **Smithfield**, according to Pastor **Reuben Cason**. Three speakers highlighted the rally, including Master's Men general director **Ken Akers**. Other speakers were Tennessee pastor **Cliff Donoho** and Home Missions staffer **David Crowe**. The rally theme was "Pressing Toward the Mark."

More than 200 people attended opening services for the new building at **Cape Fear FWB Church** in **Wilmington**. Contractors, neighbors and friends helped members cel-

ebate the opening. Two people were converted the next Sunday. **Patrick Hall** pastors.

Pastor **Ral Alsbrook** baptized eight converts at **Harvest FWB Church** in **Huntersville**. Members distributed literature to 5,000 people prior to their "Harvest of Blessing Sunday." Sixty-seven attended services.

Fiftieth anniversary activities at **Maple Street FWB Church** in **Rockingham** included a new look. Pastor **Ray Cribb** said the church added a baptistry, a handicap-accessible ramp, an expanded auditorium entrance, a new nursery and other renovations.

Oklahoma: They're calling it **Allie's House**, a non-profit organization formed in memory of **Allison Webb**. Allison died of cancer at age three (August 2003). Her parents, **Scott** and **Linda Webb**, started Allie's House to help families who have children with cancer. Medical and travel expenses place a great deal of financial and emotional stress on family members. A portion of all funds raised through Allie's House goes toward cancer research. The Webb family are members of **Calvary FWB Church** in **Norman**. Anyone interested in contributing, please contact:

Cassie Horath
3728 S. Telephone Rd.
Moore, OK 73160
cjhorath@hotmail.com
405-912-9728 (home)
405-517-1495 (cell)

Pastor **Stan Konopinski** reports a second mortgage burned in 20 years at **Trinity FWB Church** in **Oklahoma City**. That's a major-league accomplishment for a congregation of 50. Pastor Konopinski began with 19 members in 1993. The church is 43 years old and has retired \$182,000 in mortgage indebtedness in two decades.

CrossPointe FWB Church in **Norman** (formerly First FWB Church) reports six new members. **Joe Grizzle** pastors.

Tennessee: Members of **New Hope FWB Church** in **Joelton** broke ground in February



Holding Shovels (L to R): **Troy Foster** (Chairman of Trustees), **Steve Willhite** (Chairman of Deacons), **Vernon Barker** (Senior Citizens Pastor), **Becky Raymer** (President of Women Active for Christ), **Barry Simpson** (Pastor), **Steve Lindsay** (Minister of Education and Youth)

for a \$2.4 million sanctuary and education/administration wing. Pastor **Barry Simpson** said he expects to complete the project in one year. The church has been active in the community for more than a century. They built their first sanctuary in the early 1900s, the second in 1974. Tennessee promotional director **Charles Thigpen** brought greetings from the state association.

Pastor **Gene Parton** of **Mt. Zion FWB Church** in **Ashland City** made a hospital call on a terminally ill cancer patient that turned into a soul-winning delight. Brother Parton led the patient to Christ, then spoke with others visiting in the same room at Vanderbilt Hospital. Before he left that day, the good pastor had won seven people to Christ and witnessed three rededications.

Ten new members joined **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville**. The church made arrangements for those members who choose to do so to give tithes and offerings via automated drafts from checking or savings accounts. They also accept credit cards! Pastor **Rob Morgan** says it's just another way to make it easier to be a cheerful giver.

Pastor **Cliff Donoho** reports five conversions, four baptisms and 14 rededications at **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Nashville**.

Stan Coker has been named manager at **Cumberland Camp** in **Woodlawn**. He was pastor at **Richland FWB Church** in **Nashville**.



A Classic Makeover

By Keith Fletcher
Creative Director

For more than 44 years, teachers and students have trusted Randall House curriculum for accurate and thorough Bible coverage for adult Sunday School classes. Even with a totally new look, *Bible Teacher Classic* and *Bible Scholar Classic*, as their names imply, continue that heritage.

The Classic series is the answer for classes who want to continue a through-the-Bible survey approach in Sunday School. The ongoing eight-year cycle provides complete Bible coverage for in-depth study. Those who want a more family-centered, chronological approach to Bible study (based on a six-year cycle) should select Randall House's CLEAR curriculum, which uses common lesson themes for all ages.

Improved Appearance

Bible Teacher Classic, *Bible Scholar Classic* and *Depth*, the correlated personal devotional guide, have new typefaces and designs that facilitate ease in reading. The clean, sharp text and easy-to-follow page layouts in all three products will appeal to both the casual reader and serious student of any age. The goal of the design is print that is uncluttered and more readable than ever before.

The new format of *Bible Teacher* offers additional space in many margins for notes and additional comments. Applications and lesson summaries help with preparation and instruction.

Shared Features

As always, each lesson is built around a scriptural core. The reference to this "study text" is now part of the lesson title. For quick reference, both *Teacher* and *Scholar* share the scripture selections from the study text of each lesson. (In previous issues these passages were called the "printed text.") Identical verse selections are printed in the margin of both *Teacher* and *Scholar*.

Lesson objectives, discussion questions and daily Bible readings are provided in both editions. *Depth* takes those daily Bible readings and gives a devotional thought based on the passage as well as prayer requests for church or denominational ministries.

Your Comments

Change is seldom easy, but change plays an essential part of every improvement. If you have comments or suggestions for making the Classic curriculum even more effective for your ministry and personal study, please contact us at 1-800-877-7030 or on the web at randallhouse.com. ■



**RANDALL
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Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

The Classic series is an ongoing eight-year cycle of complete Bible coverage for in-depth Bible study. This series includes the following products:

- *Bible Teacher Classic*
- *Bible Scholar Classic*
- *Depth*

the Lord's
work

"I Don't Think I Could Do That"

By David Williford
Director of Institutional Advancement

That was the remark my secretary made to me last year about this time. It was getting close to the end of our fiscal year, and I was contacting some potential donors, asking them to make a contribution to Free Will Baptist Bible College before the year ended. In an effort to finish the year in the black we were cutting expenditures and seeking to increase giving. The secretary in our office walked in on the end of a phone conversation with one of those donors.

After I wrapped up the call and was signing letters she had for me, she asked a question. "Do you have a hard time asking people for money?" She continued, "I don't think I could do that."

Welcome to the world of fund-raising where we talk about the one thing most people don't want to discuss—money. Most of us are private about our finances. We've been taught money is a private issue, not something discussed casually or with strangers. But then here comes some guy to your church, home or place of business, and boldly asks you to part with some of your hard-earned cash. Not only does he want you to part with it, he wants you to give it away! Good grief, doesn't this man have a clue?

What makes a man travel all over the country; sleep in countless hotels, eat fast food and try to talk you out of your money? I dare not speak for other men in our movement who have ministries like mine, but I'll tell you why I feel comfortable talking to folks like you about giving:

I'm not just asking you to give; I'm asking you to invest.

When you give, you get nothing in return. When you invest, there is the anticipation of a return on your investment. I'm convinced that money invested

in the Lord's work will bring a return, both in this life and in the life to come.

I believe that giving brings real joy.

Doesn't your greatest joy at Christmas come when you see someone's eyes light up as he unwraps the gift you gave? Jesus said it is better to give than to receive. I view my role as one who helps people receive a blessing from the Lord by wisely investing the resources the Lord entrusts to them.

I deeply and firmly believe in the ministry I represent.

I know first hand the impact that Free Will Baptist Bible College can have on a young person's life, because it made that impact on me as a young man. Far beyond the knowledge I received, the kind of person I am was largely developed in those days at FWBBC. Lessons relating to character, integrity, honesty and faithfulness were instilled in me as a student. I am convinced that the life-lessons taught at FWBBC are invaluable for any young person.

Let me close with this plea: Become a person who gives willingly and lovingly, wherever you give. You will receive a greater blessing for being that type of person, and you will bless greatly those to whom you chose to give. If you would like to talk about investing in the lives of young people studying at FWBBC, call me. I promise to tell you about them, and I promise to ask you to invest in their lives.

My phone number is 615-844-5205. My email is dwilliford@fwbbc.edu. ■



Free Will Baptist
Bible College

"I am convinced that the life-lessons taught at FWBBC are invaluable for any young person."

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



A Tale of Two Stories

By David L. Brown
Associate Director

The Church's Money

Becky, treasurer at First Free Will Baptist Church, was dissatisfied with the earnings her church receives on the church's savings account. She looked at moving some of the savings to a CD but doesn't like the idea of locking up funds in case they are needed for an emergency. Plus, her local bank's money market and CD rates aren't that impressive.

She feels that, like the good steward of Matthew 25, she has an obligation to be wise with church funds. The rates banks offer on savings and money market accounts are often less than the inflation rate, which means the church loses purchasing power by placing their funds in these accounts. This is like the foolish steward who buried his talent.

Becky understands that higher returns can also bring risk the church does not want to take with their excess funds. She wants to find a place to put the church funds in order to receive a reasonable rate of return without taking on risk.

Becky called the Free Will Baptist Foundation and discovered they offer money management trusts for organizations and churches. The funds are conservatively invested in United States government agency bonds and long-term CDs. The rate is variable but through the years has exceeded the inflation rate by 2–3%.

The church can place any amount they wish with the Foundation and withdraw up to \$50,000 on seven days' notice. Becky liked the concept of money management trusts and First Church decided this was the place for their savings.

Personal Money

Walt and Rebecca recently retired. They have been careful through the years and managed to accumulate some resources. Having just started their retirement years, the future is uncertain, but they are dissatisfied with CD and money market returns.

Walt: *We are looking for a place to put these assets so they can work for us. We are not comfortable with the ups and downs of the stock market. We have always*

tithed on our income but we would like to do more. If we do not need these funds, we want to give a significant gift to Free Will Baptists.

Rebecca: *I am not comfortable managing our savings. I just want to give it to someone we can trust to do a good job and, hopefully, benefit the Lord's work as well.*

They discovered that the Free Will Baptist Foundation offers money management trusts that can achieve their goals.

Money management trusts are fully revocable trusts that earn a variable rate of return. The funds are conservatively invested in government agency bonds and certificates of deposits. Throughout the years the funds have earned 2–3% above the inflation rate.

Individuals must name a Free Will Baptist ministry as a 20% beneficiary of the money management trust. This provision takes place upon the death of the individuals.

Walt and Rebecca liked the concept of the money management trust. It allowed them to make a provisional gift to Free Will Baptist ministries at their death but retain the right to fully revoke the trust at any time. The conservative, government-backed investment style was what they desired for their savings.

The Free Will Baptist Foundation sets the rates on money management trusts twice a year. The rate for the six-month period ending June 30 is 4.15%. The rate for the second six-month period ending December 31 will be set in late June. Contact our office for information on that rate. You can read other stories about how planned gifts have helped individuals at our website www.fwbgifts.org or call toll-free 877-336-7575. ■



THE
FREE WILL
BAPTIST
FOUNDATION

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- The Free Will Baptist Foundation offers money management trusts for organizations and churches.
- Money management trusts are fully revocable trusts that earn a variable rate of return.



Home Missions Needs Missionaries

By Larry A. Powell
General Director

Our most pressing need for North American missions today is qualified church planters. We must have aggressive laborers who are not afraid of long hours and hard work in the field. If you are sensing God's leadership, please make preparation to

respond to this challenging ministry. I would like to share with you some areas of ministry in our department.

the ethnic groups as well as providing an avenue of service for members of the supporting churches.

Military Chaplaincy

Today, we have colonels, commanders, majors and captains preaching and teaching the salvation story to a great host of lost people in the military all around the world. These Free Will Baptist preachers in uniform are seeing hundreds saved. As we visit our Bible colleges, we are confronting young men concerning consideration of and preparation for this ministry.

The candidate for this missionary role must complete his Bible college degree and go on to earn a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree. The candidate should choose his seminary with care. It must meet governmental approval and stand for the fundamentals of the faith. We rejoice that we have several men pursuing this course. The Home Missions Department provides the ecclesiastical endorsement for the minister applying for this arm of service.

Success in the Harvest

Five church planters will dedicate new facilities this year. Four of our missionaries are in building programs at this time. Three more have plans on the drawing board and five are acquiring buildings and land. Three church planters will come to self-supporting status this year.

God has given great success. To Him be glory and praise!

Millions Still Lost in America

Many great cities and seven states are without a single Free Will Baptist witness. The Lord of the harvest is still calling.

Will you respond? ■

Team Ministry

Home Missions invites you to be a part of a church planting team. Team members include a lead minister, visitation minister and a music/youth minister. All members need necessary training and experience which will enhance the work in their individual areas.

Partnership Ministry

We are encouraging career men and women to move to cities where our missionaries are located, get jobs and settle in, and help the home missionary to plant a solid church. These partnership members can be involved in outreach, music, youth, teaching and other vital areas of ministry. This can be such a fulfilling time of work for the Lord.

Cross-Cultural Ministries

A number of our Free Will Baptist home missionaries are presently ministering to the Hispanic, Asian and Slavic Russian people in their selected communities of service. We are training Hispanic pastors at our seminary located in Inman, South Carolina. On May 1, 2004, our first group of newly-trained pastors graduated from this institute and are ready for the harvest fields. With our Russian and Korean connections, we can provide a pastor to reach these precious people as well.

We are asking pastors across the United States to open their church facilities to a cross-cultural ministry with an ethnic group in their area. Many of our pastors have stepped forward and accepted this challenge and now have flourishing multi-cultural ministries in progress. This is a tremendous help to



Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

Is the Lord calling you to one of the seven states that do not have Free Will Baptist churches or mission works?

- Connecticut
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New York
- North Dakota
- Vermont



Garnett Reid

Sum of the Old Testament Parts

The Bible's Story-Line, Part VI

The story-line of the Bible so far goes like this:

God is establishing His kingdom rule over all that He has created.

He purposes to bring all creation into complete submission under His sovereignty.

He will accomplish this through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ, as Mediator.

The final end of God's plan is to bring the highest possible glory to Himself.

In the Old Testament, God reveals the promise, the initial phases of His plan to reconcile fallen humans to Himself.

This plan unfolds in history through a series of covenant relationships He makes with His people Israel.

Before we move to the fulfillment of this promise in the New Covenant, let's examine briefly how each Old Covenant book contributes to the dual themes of kingdom and covenant.

The Pentateuch

Genesis begins the kingdom (1:26–28) and covenant (6:18) themes. In chapter 12, God's covenant with Abraham establishes His promise to bless the world through this man's family. Abraham responds by "believing" God (15:6), showing that a right standing with Him comes through faith. The rest of Genesis explains how the Lord works to overcome obstacles which threaten this covenant.

The book of Exodus reveals God as both Savior and King. He redeems Abraham's family through a mighty deliverance based

on His promises to Abraham (2:24–25), then establishes another covenant with them at Sinai (the Mosaic covenant). In this bond, God discloses His holy character and demands that His people show exclusive loyalty to Him (20:1–17).

This truth about the holy God who lives with His people unfolds in Leviticus as they worship Him (19:2). When they violate His holiness by sinning against Him, the Lord provides through the Mosaic covenant a means for restoring the broken relationship. Sacrificial blood alone atones for sin (17:11) as the great King forgives those who trust in His provision by complying with His demands.

In Numbers, God's people anticipate receiving the land promised to Abraham. Yet as they journey toward Canaan, unbelief plagues their relationship with the holy King (14:11). Sin's consequences in the lives of the covenant people prove devastating. The book looks forward to a coming King and His triumphant Kingdom, however (24:17–19).

Deuteronomy represents a renewal of the Mosaic covenant with a new generation of Israelites poised to enter the land promised to Abraham. God is their King (33:5) and He demands covenant loyalty centered in their heart-felt devotion to Him (4:29; 5:29; 6:5). Here we get our first glimpse of a coming covenant which will transform people from the inside out (30:6).

The Historical Books

The conquest and settlement of Canaan under Joshua offers a fresh reminder that God will keep His promises made to Abraham (24:1–13). Israel must keep covenant loyalty, however, by fearing the Lord and obeying "all the law which Moses" had commanded (1:6–9). Chapter 24 serves as a renewed pledge by the people to keep the Mosaic covenant.

Israel's resolve to be faithful unravels in Judges. A spiral of unfaithfulness (2:11–23) plunges the nation into turmoil and leads to God's chastening. His covenant with Abraham remains intact, however (2:1). He will bless Abraham's children; yet those who are disloyal are not true covenant children of faithful Abraham. The book closes with a hint of a kingdom to come (21:25).

Ruth models covenant loyalty during the judges' era of apostasy—an amazing example given that she is not a descendant of Abraham! David is her great-grandson (4:17–22) in the line that will culminate in the King of Kings, Jesus.

The books of Samuel mark the beginning of the kingdom in Israel. God still demands heart-loyalty to the Mosaic covenant from His people (1 Sam. 12:20–25). In II Samuel 7:8–17, God's covenant with David provides for an eternal dynasty with David's Son ruling on the throne.

This great King is none other than Jesus Christ. If He is not reigning with absolute authority in your life today, trust Him with all your heart and submit your will in obedience to His lordship. ■

Next Month: How the kingdom and covenants fare in Israel—more historical books, wisdom and prophecy.



Mary Nell Beck

You Can Keep a Journal

The phone rang at the par-

sonage on a Tuesday afternoon. The lady who was to bring the devotional that night at our WNAC meeting had gotten sick, and so the president of our group called the preacher's wife. "Yes, I'll fill in," I said.

This basic story has had many variations in my life as a pastor's wife, but the essence of the story line is always the same: the preacher's wife is a good last-minute replacement for devotionals. This is the usual condition under which I deliver a devotional.

Please understand, I am far from complaining, because last minute fill-ins don't have to have well-organized, well-prepared devotionals. It is a wonderful crutch for my meandering thoughts.

Keep a Devotional Journal

Now where am I going with this idea? Here is what I want to say: Keep a daily devotional journal. It is a tool I wish I had

discovered years ago. I make lists that I find in God's Word. I outline my understanding of passages that have spoken to me. I list verses I need to memorize. I write down other verses I remember on the same subject.

There's more . . . I note prayers that the Word inspires me to pray. I put in writing the painful glimpses in the mirror that reflect mud on my face. I make a record of answered prayer, of unanswered questions, of inner struggles. I think you understand. I record my walk with God. So when the phone rings on a Tuesday afternoon and I agree to speak Tuesday night, I go straight to my journal for something God has graciously taught me.

Remember the Lessons

To be more articulate in what I would share with other Free Will Baptist pastors' wives, a devotional journal is handy for more reasons than preparing a last-minute devotional. It is a ready source for remembering what God has done for me and taught me. This is a major help for a senior citizen like me. Sometimes I think when re-reading, "Did I write that? I don't even remember thinking it."

What a student God has in me! I have to keep reviewing the same material.

Here is something else. There is great delight when I hear the nuggets of truth God has given me shared with our entire congregation. Often as Terry (my husband) and I sit reading in the mornings, he or I will say, "Listen to this," and we'll share a thought from the Bible. Many times Terry

has asked me to write down for him the verses and thoughts from my journal, and then I hear them woven into a sermon the next Sunday or Wednesday.

Influence the Future

One more perk for recording your daily visits with God has to do with your family. I love my God and Savior Jesus Christ, and I want my great-great grandchildren to know that. So when I can't be around to tell them, maybe they will find Granny's devotional journal, and my hand can stretch across the ages and help lead them to God.

My encouragement to all of us ladies is to leave Martha alone in the kitchen once a day. Go sit with Mary at Jesus' feet and take notes. They make wonderful "instant devotionals" (Just add the water of last-minute necessity); they help us remember God's workings in our lives (You will eventually have senior moments, if not already); they can be useful to your husband/pastor, and they can be a testimony to your descendants.

The Bible doesn't tell us, but Mary may have had a pen and scroll with her as the roast cooked and she sat listening to Jesus speak. ■

About the Writer: Mrs. Mary Nell Beck is a member of Hyde Park Free Will Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia, where her husband, Terry Beck, pastors. She is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College and a graduate of Bob Jones University. The Becks have four children. Mary Nell is the only daughter of the late Dr. L. C. Johnson, first president of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Directory Update

Tennessee

Rick Kennedy to First Church, Waverly

Kevin Payne to Corner Stone Church, Murfreesboro

Other Personnel

Steven Thomas to Trinity Church, Greenville, NC, as minister of music

David Mizelle to Trinity Church, Greenville, NC, as minister to students from Rocky Pass Church, Nebo, NC



Thomas Marberry

Moments for Families with Prodigals

By Robert J. Morgan (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2003, 236 pp., paperback, \$11.99).

For the past 21 years Robert

Morgan has served as pastor of Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of 14 books and more than 100 articles published in leading Christian magazines. He is also a well-known conference speaker on a variety of subjects.

This is a daily devotional guide specifically designed for families struggling with wayward children. Unfortunately, many Christian young people (about 90% of them young men) stray from the faith and live contrary to the values and principles they have been taught. The good news is that 85 percent of these prodigals eventually return to the faith. Many churches today are filled with former prodigal sons and daughters the Lord has drawn back to Himself.

The book is divided into 108 sections called moments; each moment can be read as a devotional thought in one or two minutes. Many of these moments are prayers that can be prayed by parents or grandparents who struggle with the rampant unbelief and rebellion of a young person. Many are based upon passages from the Old and New Testaments personalized to include the name of the prodigal child.

For example, moment 57 is based on Psalms 51:10 and 43:3. It reads as follows:

Create in _____ a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within him.

Send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead him. Let them bring him to your holy hill.

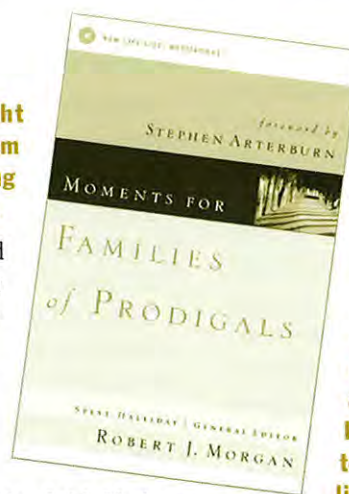
The material found in the book comes from several sources. The author has drawn upon his own experience as a father and pastor, his extensive study of the scriptures and a careful review of literature in the field. He has produced a book filled with practical help for hurting parents.

The theme of the book is found in moment 43 where he writes, "Don't give up on your kids, never stop praying, and don't give in to discouragement, for all discouragement comes from the Devil."

Moment 54 points out how difficult it is to turn off the inner voices of doubt and discouragement that plague every parent of a prodigal. Morgan writes, "Learn to stop listening to the inner voices of apprehension; instead preach to yourself the affirmations of God. Talking to yourself isn't a sign of insanity—sometimes, it's a cure for it."

Most parents of prodigals carry around a heavy load of guilt; they feel responsible for what has happened. Pastor Morgan suggests this prayer in moment 65,

Dear Lord, I do not ask to be released from a healthy Christlike burden to pray for this child, and I do not ask



for a lifting of godly concern. But this unhealthy, unholy, unbearable fear, this grief that makes me want to die, this intense panic and pain—these, O Lord, are crushing me and I can't control them. I am more of a prodigal than my child, Lord, so please heal us both today. Please break through, lift us up, set us free.

This is primarily a collection of daily devotionals and not a reference work. The author does, however, refer to several books he has found useful in his own struggle with a wayward child. These can be useful to both the parent or grandparent who needs help and to pastors who try to counsel and comfort them.

Pastor Morgan's book is a practical devotional guide for parents who need help and affirmation at one of the most difficult times in their lives. The author writes with sensitivity and from personal experience. He notes there are no quick and easy answers to life's most difficult problems. The Lord does not, however, leave believers to shift for themselves. He provides to all of them, including the parents of rebellious children, the resources they need. ■



Randy Sawyer

FAITH

We tried everything. EE

(Evangelism Explosion), CWT (Continuing Witness Training), confrontational evangelism, friendship evangelism, classes, seminars, sermons, threatening, pleading, weeping; *everything!* Our church affirmed the great commission, and the folks were clearly willing to get involved. The problem was we couldn't find a process that combined the systematic development of witnessing disciples with the careful assimilation of new converts and newcomers.

No matter how exciting the beginning, each new attempt at developing a great commission congregation ended with the same handful of faithful but bewildered participants. Those who did persevere felt unproductive and frustrated. We had not equipped them for success, but they stayed with it because they are good people who want to see souls come to Christ. As I look back, it's a wonder any of them went on visitation at all.

Then someone introduced us to *Faith Sunday School Evangelism Strategy* and in a matter of months everything began to change. Now, after nine semesters of following the *Faith* process, we have trained nearly 200 folks to share their faith, many of whom have personally experienced the thrill of leading a soul to Christ.

Staff members, laymen and women, and numerous teenagers have witnessed conversion after conversion. A passion for souls permeates every worship service, and an air of expectancy accompanies each special event. Souls are being saved, Christians are growing, and the church is alive with excitement.

Great Commission Strategy

Faith is a great commission strategy. Using an acronym for the word faith ("f" for forgiveness, "a" for available, "i" for impossible, "t" for turn, "h" for Heaven), believers are equipped to *make disciples among all ethnic groups*.

Teams of three are assigned to specific prospects, as well as door-to-door evangelism, allowing for the development of an army of soul-winners with expertise and motivation. Further, once laymen achieve a certain level of comfort in sharing their faith, they begin to look for opportunities to witness *as they are going* to work or school or home or wherever.

Denise is an African-American who has completed six semesters of *Faith*. During her first semester, she began searching for opportunities to witness to her family. A few weeks into *Faith*, she shared with us an absolutely incredible story. The previous Saturday she had visited one of her cousins with the specific goal of winning her to Christ. Since she had not yet memorized her *Faith* outline, she simply read it.

After finishing, she asked, "Now, do you want to do that?" Her cousin replied, "Well, I think I do." She visited three more relatives the same day with the same results. Amazingly, before that semester was completed, Denise had the privilege of leading 37 of her family members to Christ.

Sunday School Strategy

Faith is a Sunday School strategy. From its very inception, Sunday School has been about evangelism. As the Word of God is taught in a Sunday School class, believers

are encouraged to grow deeper in Christ while non-believers are encouraged to consider the claims of Christ. Ninety percent of all non-Christians who regularly attend Sunday School will accept Christ within the first nine months.

Sadly, most churches today consider Sunday School as the discipling arm of the church, with classes that are self-contained mini-churches. A non-believer would literally have to force his or her way into the "club." The average adult Sunday School class, in the average evangelical church, is willing to split their church rather than split their class.

However, the law of Sunday School growth is that of *multiplication by division*. The goal is to create newer units by splitting older ones. If a class is more than 18 months old, chances are that class is a closed, static unit that will not grow in the future. The key to growth is enlisting new class members and creating new units. That's what *Faith* is all about.

Faith teams are enlisted from Sunday School classes; prospects are invited to become members of Sunday School classes; and those prospects are assimilated through Sunday School classes. *Faith* utilizes the structure that is foundational to most evangelical churches and builds disciples through Sunday School one soul at a time.

Prayer Strategy

Faith is a prayer strategy. When any church commits to the great commission, that church engages the enemy in his own territory. Mobilizing for soul winning

demands intentional prayer support. *Faith* requires each participant to enlist two partners in prayer. That means, the number of folks involved in *Faith Sunday School Evangelism Strategy* triples because of those prayer partners. Imagine the power of a church committed to soul winning and prayer.

In February we hosted a *Faith Clinic** for Free Will Baptist home missionaries. Eighteen home mission pastors joined several others in learning the *Faith* strategy. In the last three months I have received dozens of emails and letters from those pastors who are already experiencing the excitement generated by *Faith*.

One pastor sent me a photograph of the baptism of their first *Faith* convert. His note read simply, "*Faith does work!*"

Let me encourage you to prayerfully consider checking out *Faith*. My church is forever changed because of it. Give it a try. It could transform your church too.

■

* We have three clinics scheduled for Free Will Baptist churches this fall (September 6–9, Michigan; November 1–4, North Carolina; November 29–December 2, Alabama). If you have questions, please give us a call at 704-867-5745.

Receipts:				Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 599	\$ 155	\$ 754	\$ 1,961	\$ 775	\$ 2,736
Arizona	105	20	125	105	159	264
Arkansas	10,204	13,015	23,219	43,275	65,406	108,681
California	41	1,276	1,317	2,342	4,698	7,040
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	0	0	245	2,768	3,013
Georgia	43,674	1,921	45,595	145,882	6,811	152,693
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	20,995	2,748	23,743	56,970	9,005	65,975
Indiana	2,559	0	2,559	7,856	1,145	9,000
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	0	40	40	0	420	420
Kentucky	0	785	785	940	2,668	3,608
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	15,681	3,928	19,608	77,806	12,198	90,004
Mississippi	24,358	1,827	26,185	57,753	3,925	61,678
Missouri	50,179	17,874	68,053	216,855	71,161	288,016
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	676	19	695	2,360	116	2,476
North Carolina	308	2,692	3,000	3,753	19,809	23,562
Ohio	23,100	2,001	25,101	67,214	12,956	80,170
Oklahoma	54,860	11,280	66,140	231,250	45,743	276,993
South Carolina	54,823	39	54,862	173,444	460	173,904
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	10,526	1,101	11,626	59,348	6,626	65,974
Texas	0	0	0	36,836	1,163	37,999
Virginia	64	131	195	302	327	629
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	295	0	295	1,837	336	2,172
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	685	15	700	3,742	64	3,807
Northwest Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$ 313,731	\$ 60,867	\$374,598	\$1,192,073	\$ 268,741	\$1,460,814
Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 1,745	27,390	\$ 29,136	\$ 6,531	\$ 120,933	\$ 127,464
Foreign Missions	196,926	7,700	204,626	740,635	33,996	774,631
FWBBC	33,010	7,700	40,710	108,292	33,996	142,288
Home Missions	74,100	6,026	80,126	299,676	26,605	326,281
Retirement & Insurance	327	4,687	5,014	1,452	20,693	22,145
Master's Men	351	4,687	5,037	2,696	20,693	23,389
Commission for Theo. Integrity	50	167	218	199	739	938
FWB Foundation	210	2,009	2,218	831	8,868	9,699
Historical Commission	50	167	218	199	739	938
Music Commission	73	167	241	296	739	1,035
Media Commission	108	167	276	436	739	1,175
Hillsdale FWB College	2,266	0	2,266	9,049	0	9,049
Other	4,514	0	4,514	21,781	0	21,781
Totals	\$ 313,731	\$ 60,867	\$374,598	\$1,192,073	\$ 268,741	\$1,460,814

TRUTH & PEACE

STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By Dean Jones, NYC Director

Truth & Peace 2003

Joey and Julie are married and serve as pastor and wife; Josh and Christi Smith are married and missionaries in Spain; Lori is an interior designer. Steven is a lieutenant in the Army and recently home from Iraq; Jason is a banker in a large metropolitan city; Michael is a national board member; Pam is married to a national director; Will is with his heavenly father; Lisa is a loving mother of three.

The names and the stories could fill several pages. Students, now much older, are serving the Lord, faithful in their walk and leaders in their circles of influence. The influence of leadership training is invaluable and a necessity for the progression of our denomination.

The saga of Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference continues today. This summer 60 high school students will spend 15 days

in team-building events, biblical leadership training and Bible studies designed to change their lives and, in turn, change your world. Make the investment in your local church, and encourage and support your students to apply for the 2005 conference. For more information, please call 1-800-877-7030 or email youth@randallhouse.com or visit www.randallhouse.com/truthpeace.htm.

Please pray for this summer's participants. They are your future and mine.



Idea of the Month

If your church doesn't have a student participating in the 2004 Truth and Peace Conference, consider adopting one into your prayer time. If your church has top-notch students you think would be an asset to the 2005 Truth and Peace Conference, please encourage them to apply for the program. It will change their lives and your congregation! ■

Ryan Akers, TN	Josh Holmes, AR	Jessica Powell, AZ
Sarah Asbury, WV	Allen Hood, AL	Lacey Price, OH
Tim Berry, OK	Drew Kernan, MO	Ashley Ridgway, OK
Holly Blott, IN	Emily Kinnick, TN	Janna Riggs, TN
Jeremy Braisher, KS	Alyssa Lambert, AR	Bobby Roskowske, MO
Rachelle Bray, OK	Thomas Leaver, TX	Kaley Schwab, AR
Chris Cole, AZ	Derek Lewis, IL	Ben Sharry, OK
Stevie Conner, MI	Seth Lombard, AR	Allan Smith, OK
Brittany Craft, OK	John Lusk, OK	Brittney Stanley, NC
Casey Deel, TN	Rachel Mackie, TN	Lauren Taylor, AR
Nathan Dickerson, AR	Rea Maestas, MO	Becky Tennille, GA
Mary Kathryn Driggers, SC	L.D. Maestas, MO	Tahnee Thielemier, AR
Paige Ellis, SC	Jennifer Martin, OK	Byron Trimble, MI
Lauren Essex, TN	Hope Martin, TN	Jessica Voltz, TX
Kyle Godbold, AR	Cassie Mayne, FL	Lauren Webb, MS
Casey Gwartney, OK	Anna McDonald, OK	Dusty Westfall, AR
Jessica Hall, NC	Melissa McKenney, AR	Samantha Williams, MO
Madison Hardin, NC	Jay Meagher, IL	Catie Wilson, OK
Spencer Henrion, OK	Haley Murphy, OK	James Yerby, AL
	Joshua Parker, MO	



Jack Williams

When God Writes the Obits

The man who captured Ghandi's

killer had been dead five months before the Boston newspapers published his obituary. Herbert Reiner, Jr., was a career diplomat who entered the U.S. Foreign Service in 1947. He went to a prayer meeting on January 30, 1948, hoping to catch a glimpse of Ghandi. It was Ghandi's last meeting.

A Hindu nationalist, enraged by Ghandi's overtures to Muslims, maneuvered past his aide and fired three shots. While others stood paralyzed at the horror, Herbert Reiner grabbed the killer and swung him into the hands of the Indian police, his action captured on the front pages of newspapers around the world.

Reiner's obituary appeared in the May 26, 2000, edition of the *Los Angeles Times* while I was on a convention planning trip to California. The obit of that famous man covered just 25 lines. I expected more for the man who caught Ghandi's killer.

Then I remembered how God wrote short obituaries in the Bible. Most are profoundly brief, none grandiose. Some rather prominent biblical characters hardly merit more than a statement of fact when they died.

Adam, for instance, the first man. He died at age 930. It won't take long to read Adam's obituary. He gets three verses in Genesis 5 (vv. 3-5). What was God thinking? Why, we give more space to a vagrant's passing.

That pattern of obits reduced to a few well-chosen words regardless of reputation continues throughout the Bible. You remember Abraham, the gentleman who started out as Abram (Genesis 12:1), left home at age 75 looking for a city and became known as the "Friend of God" (James 2:23). He is revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

When Abraham died at age 175, his death notice was limited to four verses (Genesis

25:7-10). We sing songs about his faith and preach sermons explaining the Abrahamic Covenant. Why didn't God write a fuller obit about the father of faith?

Jacob, the man whose name was changed to Israel (Genesis 35:10) fared no better. Jacob's obit is exactly one verse long (Genesis 49:33).

Elisha, that spectacular prophet with a double portion of Elijah's spirit, earned a one-verse death notice (II Kings 13:20), and half of that talks about an invasion of the Moabites! I expected more.

Even the obituary of Jesus is amazingly short, although it's repeated four times in the Gospels. Of course, Jesus' obit had to be rewritten three days later when He refused to stay dead.

Most heroes of faith get no more than a passing line or no mention at all. The great lawgiver, Moses, only managed four verses in Deuteronomy 34 (vv. 5-8). I really expected more.

The Lord didn't slight Moses, particularly in light of Noah's abbreviated obit. You may recall Noah as the fellow who saved the entire human race by building an ark of gopher wood (Genesis 6:14). Noah's death notice covers 15 words in Genesis 9:29.

David—the Old Testament hymn writer, sweet psalmist of Israel, killer of giants, a man after God's own heart, soldier and monarch—lies beneath an obit the size of a business card. Just two and a half verses (I Chronicles 29:26-28a).

Strong man, Samson, owns a two-verse plot (Judges 16:30-31). Gideon, who conquered an invading army with 300 men in a daring night attack while outnumbered so badly they stopped counting, settles for a one-verse obit (Judges 8:32).

Wait, wait—there's more. The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, fits into a tight corner verse in I Kings 11:43. John the

Baptist whom Jesus called the greatest man born among women (Matthew 11:11) ends with one verse (Matthew 14:10). What was God thinking? I expected so much more.

The point of all this is that the work of God goes on when the people of God die. Abraham dies—Isaac steps up. Moses dies—Joshua leads Israel across Jordan. Elijah rises in a whirlwind—Elisha takes up the mantle.

Stephen dies in the last verse of Acts 7. Acts 8 opens with God's hand already on a young man named Saul of Tarsus. The work of God never stops. The people of God wipe away the tears, strap on their spurs and keep looking up.

The quality of the life lived is more important than the length of the posted obituary notice. God keeps a permanent and full record someplace else, someplace higher (Job 16:19).

Part of the reason for God's notoriously brief obituary notices can be found in Hebrews 11:38 that describes those who die in faith, "... Of whom the world was not worthy. ..."

An invitation-only celebration planned when the Book of Life opens on the last day will let us see clearly that those who died in faith were not dead after all (John 11:25). They were hidden with Him in the mystery we call death (II Corinthians 5:8).

On second thought, I like the way God writes obituaries for His people. They all end, not with a period, but with a comma.



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Pastoral Ministry or Missions Track
- *Biblical Studies Major*
Minors in Children's Ministry, Christian Education, English, History, Music, Psychology, and Youth Ministry
- *English Major*
- *History Major*

B.S. Degree Programs:

- *Biblical & Ministry Studies Major*
Christian Education, General Christian Ministries, Missions, Pastoral Ministry, or Youth Ministry Tracks
- *Biblical Studies Major*
- *Biblical Studies Major, teaching licensure*
- *Business Administration Major*
MBA Preparation, Economics, or Leadership Tracks

- *Church Music Ministries Major*
- *Church Music & Youth Ministry Major*
- *Various Combination Majors*
- *Early Childhood Major*
- *English Major*
- *Exercise Science Major (P.E.)*
- *History Major*
- *Music Major, performance emphasis*
- *Physical Education Major*
- *Psychology & Learning Major*

Bachelor of Music Education (B.M.E.) Degree

Associate of Arts Degree

Associate of Christian Ministries Degree

Associate of Science in Business Degree

Associate of Science Degree in Early Childhood

Financial aid is readily available. Write or call today!



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